

XXIX.—*Field-notes on some Birds observed in Western China.* By Capt. H. R. DAVIES*.

PHASIANUS ELEGANS (Cat. B. xxii. p. 329).

Stone's Pheasants are common in Western Yunnan. They are not usually found much below 4000 feet, and are most plentiful near the tops of the ranges at an altitude of from 6000 to 8000 feet, in long grass and fern, or in fir-woods. I have usually met with them singly or two together, but on one occasion I saw a covey of ten. The crow of this bird is hardly distinguishable from that of the English Pheasant, and the noise the cock makes when flushed is also the same. I have not often seen it in the Tibetan part of the country (W. Szechuen), though I shot one a few marches south-west of Li-tang at 10,500 feet.

CHRYSOLOPHUS AMHERSTIÆ (Cat. B. xxii. p. 342).

In Yunnan this species is about as common as the last-mentioned, and is found at fairly high elevations, usually in forest. It is difficult to make individuals fly, and when they rise they do so without crowing and with very little noise of the wings. They appear to be "soft" birds, very easily killed. The note is a peculiar rasping sound. Specimens were obtained in W. Yunnan at 7000 feet, and in Kweichow at 7700 feet.

ITHAGENES GEOFFROYI (Cat. B. xxii. p. 269).

This Blood-Pheasant is common in many parts of N.W. Yunnan and W. Szechuen.

* [The following interesting field-notes are contributed by Captain H. R. Davies, Oxfordshire Light Infantry, and are based on observations made during two journeys in Western China—the first in 1898-99 in the Northern Shan States and Yunnan; the second in 1899-1900 along the western borders of Yunnan and Szechuen, and thence eastward to the Yangtse.

Specimens of all the birds except the Crossoptilon and Francolin have been received and identified, and as regards these there can be little doubt to what species they belong.—F. W. STYAN, Shanghai.]

All the country north of lat. $27^{\circ} 45'$ and west of long. 102° , though nominally part of China, is physically and ethnologically Tibetan.

The Blood-Pheasants are usually found in coveys of from ten to twenty. Their call begins with one very long-drawn wheezy whistle, followed by four that are sharper.

They run fast and are difficult to flush; if forced to rise, they soon pitch again. Their plumage must be very strong, as I found several times that when plainly hit while running, with No. 6 shot, they appeared little the worse. I have never seen them at elevations below 11,000 feet, and they seem to keep just below the snow-line, which varies at different times of year. They appear to be confined to the forest, and I have never met with them on the bare tops of the ranges: they were common in all parts of the country that were suitable to them, especially along the road from Yerkalo, lat. 29° , long. 99° , north-eastward to the Upper Yangtse.

CROSSOPTILON TIBETANUM (Cat. B. xxii. p. 293).

These Eared Pheasants, large white birds with dark-coloured tails, were common in the same sort of localities as the Blood-Pheasants. They are found in large coveys and run very fast, scarcely ever flying, while they are so wary that although I saw a great many I could never get near enough for a shot. Their call is a very loud harsh crow, which can be heard for a mile or two. They keep to high altitudes and are often found in the snow. The furthest south that I have seen them is a little above lat. 28° to the N.E. of Chung-tien.

TETRAOPHISIS SZECHENYII (Cat. B. xxii. p. 103).

Found in similar localities to those inhabited by the last-mentioned species, but not so commonly; it lives in coveys. The call is a crow like that of the Eared Pheasant, but much less loud and harsh. I have twice heard whole parties crowing together, yet apparently not from alarm, as in both cases they were a long way off and had not seen or heard me.

I have noticed them in N.W. Yunnan between Pong-tse-lei and A-ten-tse, and also further north on the road from Yerka-lo towards Batang.

PERDIX SIFANICA (Cat. B. xxii. p. 195).

The Sifan Partridges I shot near Dzungun (W. Szechuen), lat. $29^{\circ} 15'$, long. $99^{\circ} 15'$, at an elevation of 11,600 feet. They were in a covey of five, in a dry valley covered with scrubby bushes, were easily flushed, and flew well.

FRANCOLINUS CHINENSIS (Cat. B. xxii. p. 136).

I found the Chinese Francolin chiefly in the lower-lying parts of Yunnan, towards the borders of Burma and Tongking. It is specially numerous in the valley of the Salween. I heard a few calling at Tung-hai, between Yunnan-fu and Tongking (6200 feet), but I do not think it is common at such an elevation.

BAMBUSICOLA FYTCHII (Cat. B. xxii. p. 257).

Fytche's Bamboo-Partridge I have only seen once in Yunnan; this was in the Mekong Valley below 4000 feet. I have met with the birds several times in the Northern Shan States, usually in coveys of five or six among thick jungle, where they are difficult to flush without a dog. They rise with a sort of whistling scream, and occasionally fly up into the trees.

MERGANSER SQUAMATUS Gould (Cat. B. xxvii. p. 478) *.

This bird was observed in Yunnan near Lung-ling, lat. $24^{\circ} 30'$, long. $98^{\circ} 30'$, at 4000 feet, and near Yunnan-fu at 6000 feet. It is common in the high-lying plains of Yunnan, and I have seen it at 14,000 feet in the Tibetan part of Western Szechuen.

* [One of the examples obtained in Yunnan is now in the British Museum, and has been compared with the type and with those collected by Capt. Wingate (*cf.* *Ibis*, 1900, p. 602). It is not sexed, but is in the plumage of a female, and is perhaps immature, and in this state is hardly to be distinguished from the Common Goosander; the species can, however, be recognised by the double crest. As no specimens were brought back from Szechuen, it is impossible to say to which form they belonged.—F. W. S.]